

November 5, 2023

All Saints Sunday

Matthew 12:38–42

“We want a sign”

1. The pictures around the sanctuary today make me want to figure out who in the church is related to the person on each picture.
 - a. My mom and dad’s picture is over there.
 - b. Here’s a copy of that same picture.
 - c. Who do you think I look more like: my mom or my dad? (walk down to where the children are seated)
 - d. I know there are people who say I look more like my dad, but I also know people who say I look like my mom.
 - e. What’s more, I do things which are like what they used to do
 - f. I like to help people like my dad did
 - i. My dad was a teacher, and at one point taught high school math
 - ii. There was a student in their small town who was having problems with math
 - iii. But my dad wasn’t his teacher
 - iv. Still, the student asked my dad to help him
 - v. The student happened to be my mom and dad’s milk man, which meant he came early each morning to deliver milk to them before heading to school
 - vi. Dad told him to come by mom and dad’s house a half an hour earlier than usual, and dad would tutor him.
 - vii. And mom would feed him breakfast. This when on for a while.
 - viii. That was my dad.
 - g. I like to problem-solve like my mom did
 - i. Mom would notice something not working as it should and would try to figure out how to fix it
 - ii. My mom wasn’t an engineer, but she sometimes would fix things in the house just by tinkering, well before YouTube DIY videos!
 - iii. One time our washing machine stopped working, and mom took it apart
 - iv. She noticed that a belt was broken, so she bought the belt, replaced it and put the washing machine back together. And it worked.
 - v. That was my mom.
2. On this All Saints Sunday, we think about our loved ones who have died, (and also those who are still with us, why not?), and we think about the ways in which we look like them and act like them.
 - a. One thing I didn’t mention about my mom and dad was their faith

- b. They believed and trusted in God in a way that made it a part of who they were as people
 - c. They taught us, their children, about God, and more importantly showed us how they leaned on their faith when things were really tough.
 - d. I wonder if you can think of ways in which you have parts of who you are which come from your parents or relatives who have raised you
 - i. Maybe it's about how to help and trust in people, or how to be a committed teammate in sports you play, or how to take care of the planet.
 - ii. Maybe it's about how to pray, or how to feel God is with you in the difficult times in life.
3. The ultimate person to compare our actions to, of course, is Jesus. And in our passage today he gets harassed because those who criticized him didn't think he "looked" like the hero they were expecting.
- a. When the passage says they wanted "a sign" think of it like they were asking for a miracle which was going to amaze them and everyone
 - b. Look, they were saying, we've seen leaders sent by God before:
 - i. Moses split open the Red Sea and people crossed it on dry land
 - ii. Elijah made fire rain down from heaven to destroy evil people
 - iii. What's your trick, Jesus? Prove to us that you're the leader we're waiting for.
 - c. And Jesus asked: you want a sign? You want proof?
 - i. I give you sign after sign, and you reject it.
 - ii. I heal and feed people you ignore: and that's not good enough
 - iii. I teach with stories which show you the heart of God: and that's not good enough
 - d. And what sign is it that you really want anyway?
 - i. I bet it's a sign that shows how right you are, and that I'm here from God to be an answer to your prayers.
 - ii. Well, I have news for you, sometimes God answers prayers with messages we weren't expecting
 - iii. Sometimes God answers with people we weren't expecting as well!
 - iv. And in fact, sometimes we are getting signs left and right, but because we're not paying attention, we just miss them altogether
 - v. (and this is when Jesus tells them he'll give them the sign of Jonah and they wouldn't buy it:
 - 1. You know, Jonah who was in the belly of the whale 3 days
 - 2. Jesus would be in the belly of the tomb and be raised in the 3rd day
 - 3. And would they recognize that as the sign of God's power? Many didn't)

- e. And on this All Saints Sunday we can remember signs from God in the life and the example of our loved ones
 - i. Signs of compassion to help family members or strangers
 - ii. Signs of courage against injustice
 - iii. Signs of sacrifice out of love
 - f. We may or may not have our uncle's green eyes, or our grandmother's red hair, but we can have their compassion, courage and sacrifice out of love to do God's work.
4. Be open to seeing the signs of Jesus at work in each of us, especially the signs that may not look like something a "hero" would do, but definitely something a saint of the church would do.

Reflection Questions:

1. Share a story of how a loved one who is no longer with us impacted your life.
2. Why do you think the biblical teachers and Pharisees were asking Jesus for a sign in Matthew 12:38-42?
3. What would you like to be your Christian / spiritual legacy you hope your family remembers and emulates?



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